

Left Out of No Child Left Behind:
Teach for America's Outsized Influence
on Alternative Certification



Future of American Education Project

By Alexander Russo

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Foreword

One of the intriguing developments of the past couple years has been the emergence of a new school of reform advocacy groups committed to driving policy change. This is a healthy development, as such policy changes are essential to rethinking and redesigning American schooling for the challenges and opportunities of a new era. For decades, would-be education reformers have struggled with the vagaries of the policy process. Those involved in today's efforts can, and should, learn from these precursors. One of the best-known and most relevant of those is Teach for America, which endured a trial by fire as it found its way into the policy sphere.

In “Left Out of No Child Left Behind,” veteran education journalist Alexander Russo explains how TFA edged into the policy debates and was nearly undone by its reluctance on that front. Russo connects TFA's increasing presence on Capitol Hill with the debates and ultimate passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in the early 2000s. Russo argues that it was primarily luck that TFA was able to escape the NCLB process unscathed. After that scare, TFA recognized that it would do well to engage policymakers more systematically and aggressively so it could pursue federal funding, expand to new locales, and retain flexibility around teacher certification.

Russo draws key lessons from TFA's experience with NCLB:

- **Get in early.** Not only was TFA lucky to emerge unhurt from the NCLB process, but it also likely should have been present on Capitol Hill during even earlier debates on teacher preparation. Other reform groups that move more slowly into the political arena might not be so fortunate and could see laws passed that directly harm their mission and practice.

- **Cultivate bipartisan support.** While many groups depend heavily on one party or the other for support, TFA successfully nurtured backing from Republicans and Democrats in roughly equal measure. This helped them in reform debates.
- **Build coalitions.** TFA's focus during and after NCLB authorization was on the aspects of the law that dealt with teacher quality and certification; they did far less lobbying on other key facets of NCLB or other debates on federal funding. This led, says Russo, to “a certain degree of resentment and isolation from other groups, advocates, and offices” who wanted TFA's support and clout on these other issues. Reform groups engaging the political realm should carefully weigh which policy debates they can realistically partake in and how doing so will garner support from useful partners.

Public education involves spending public funds to educate the public's kids. This inevitably involves public policy, and therefore politics. Russo offers an important window into how this played out for one important organization and uses it to provide practical insight for many of today's would-be reformers. I hope you find this fascinating, brisk account as compelling as I have. For further information on the paper, Alexander Russo can be reached at alexander-russo@gmail.com. For additional information on the activities of AEI's education policy program, please visit <http://www.aei.org/policy/education/> or contact Daniel Lautzenheiser at daniel.lautzenheiser@aei.org.

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About the Author

Alexander Russo is a writer, blogger, and author who has been published or quoted in *Slate*, *The Washington Monthly*, *Washington Post*, *Huffington Post*, *New York Times*, and *USA Today*. His school reform website, *This Week in Education*, is one of the nation's most popular education blogs. He was a 2009 Spencer Education Journalism Fellow at Columbia University. His 2011 book, *Stray Dogs, Saints, and Saviors*

(Jossey-Bass), chronicled the attempt by a network of unionized charter schools to rescue a broken Los Angeles high school. Before he began writing, Russo served as an education adviser to two US senators and the chancellor of the New York City public schools, and as a high school English teacher. A version of this paper will be published in his next book, *School of Politics*.

Left Out of No Child Left Behind

When Kevin Huffman joined Teach for America (TFA) in September 2000 as vice president of development and general counsel, there was no real federal operation in place at TFA, nor anyone within the organization who really knew how Washington, DC, worked—including Huffman.

“I had absolutely no idea what I was doing for the first six months,” he said.¹

The 1992 Swarthmore College graduate had started out teaching first and second grade in Houston with TFA and then gone to New York University for law school. He had represented a few education clients during his two-year stint at the DC law firm Hogan & Hartson, but little of that work had involved building relationships with congressional leaders and White House officials. In his new job, he was going to have to do a lot of just that.

Huffman joined TFA at the end of the second Clinton administration, when George W. Bush and Al Gore were slogging it out on the campaign trail. Teach for America was no longer a new or unknown endeavor. In fact, it had received a ton of accolades—along with a fair amount of criticism—and had emerged from its early financial struggles determined to stay focused and expand operations. Celebrities clamored to participate in Teach for America Week. High-level admirers included AOL-Time Warner’s Jerry Levin, Intel’s Craig Barrett, and Eli Broad. Once forced to ask strangers for money, TFA head Wendy Kopp noted in her 2003 book about the organization’s development, TFA now found friends and alumni on the other side of the table.²

Now, after years placing 500–800 corps members in roughly fifteen regions, the decade-old TFA was aiming to ramp things up to forty sites over the next five years. Part of that expansion relied on continued cooperation from local school districts and

administrators, options for alternative certification at the state level, favorable legislation, and increased funding from Washington.

For the first few months in particular, the affable Huffman did not have much of a plan. “I thought to myself, ‘Gosh we should probably get to know some of the folks on the Hill a little bit better,’” he said. “I literally went to the Hill and met with random members and random staff people.”

The inner workings of DC political life are notoriously obscure for even the sharpest minds. Everyone looks too young for the suits and dresses they are wearing and too stressed for anyone on the short side of forty. The official events taking place in public or on camera—hearings, floor debate, votes, and even markups—are often the least important interactions among members. The widespread use of acronyms, the arcane procedures, and the rapid-fire delivery of information (or false friendliness) can make it difficult to figure out exactly what people are really agreeing to do.

“It took a long time to realize saying they ‘liked what we were doing’ didn’t mean that they were going to help me get money,” said Huffman. “I didn’t realize that people saying they liked you didn’t mean that they were actually going to help you.”

TFA would not hire a full-time government relations person for another year, and would not have anything approaching a mastery of Washington’s inner workings for another three. “We were basically in survival mode that whole time,” said Huffman.

A Slow and Reluctant Evolution

A decade after the fact, it might be hard to believe how disorganized, reluctant, and inwardly focused some of the newer education reform groups and

fund—ers—the Gates and Broad Foundations, Harlem Children’s Zone, the Knowledge Is Power Program, the NewSchools Venture Fund, and others—once were when it came to federal government relations, advocacy, and policy efforts. But it’s true.

For most of the 1990s and well into the 2000s, the new wave of “no excuses” reformers and funders were only occasional, half-hearted participants in the messy business of Washington policymaking. They launched and funded impressive and successful new organizations and developed several innovative ideas about how to fix American schools. They took public funding when it was available and chafed privately when they bumped up against bureaucratic or administrative obstacles in the districts where they operated. But they were built on private philanthropic donations and generally did not get involved in politics, much less policy, until there was really no other choice.

Several examples of this evolution exist, but TFA’s is perhaps the most dramatic. After a largely successful first decade in operation, the organization would go through something of a trial by fire in Washington in the early 2000s, during which its small but growing federal revenues and its teachers’ eligibility to be hired and placed in school districts were threatened. It was only through a combination of good luck, friends in high places, and the immediate appeal of its model that TFA would be able to survive long enough to change course and build a robust DC lobbying effort.

For all of TFA’s evolution, however, some remnants of the organization’s hesitance to step outside narrow programmatic concerns have remained, raising questions about if and whether TFA has further to go in taking leadership of the school reform movement. At the same time, dramatic increases in the alternative certification sector raise questions about TFA’s outsized role in teacher quality policymaking decisions and potential conflicts between its programmatic interests and its larger goals.

“I am wary of overconfidence,” wrote Kopp in her 2003 book. “What goes up often comes down.”³

Little did anyone know at the time that TFA’s belated arrival to the DC policymaking scene would

result in an awkward loophole in No Child Left Behind, an explosion in alternative certification programs (including online and for-profit ones), and prolonged tensions between TFA’s desires to expand its program and its broader reform role.

Where Is Everybody?

In 1993, fresh off of helping organize the failed Clinton Health Security Express bus tour, blunt-spoken Amy Wilkins took a job as chief lobbyist for a fledgling education nonprofit called the Education Trust that had opened up shop just a couple of years before.

After a largely successful first decade in operation, TFA would go through something of a trial by fire in Washington in the early 2000s.

The nicotine gum—chomping daughter of a well-known civil rights activist and writer (Roger Wilkins) was a Barnard graduate and Peace Corps alumni who had previously worked for the Children’s Defense Fund. Wilkins had quickly become one of the most effective reform advocates on the Hill—in part because she was among the only ones there other than the unions and education associations.

“There wasn’t anyone working the Hill,” said Wilkins, startled at the absence of lobbying on the K–12 front. “There was nobody up here but me.”

Wilkins came to education advocacy from an earlier wave of reform-minded think tanks and advocacy shops whose focus was more on accountability and equity than on innovation and autonomy. But these were few in number, including the Citizen’s Commission on Civil Rights, run by Bill Taylor and Dianne Piche, and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. The Children’s Defense Fund, perhaps the most well-known child advocacy group in the nation, was already downsizing its K–12 education shop.

Either too new or too disinterested (or both), TFA and the new wave of reform groups that were beginning to come online in the 1990s were little involved in that decade's education legislation: Goals 2000, the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the 1998 voluntary national testing proposal, the small schools program, and the education school accountability debate of 1998. The older advocacy groups were foreign to them in both their methods (reports, letters, lawsuits, lobbying) and their priorities (accountability, equity, adequate resources). As it would emerge, TFA's style would be to operate independently and in private and to focus on internal and programmatic issues (earmarks, authorizations, and eligibility).

Seven years later, when Huffman arrived at TFA, things had not changed all that much. There was still a sense among some of the newer education reform groups that education was not political, or at least was bipartisan. Their ideas, the quality of their programs, and the urgency of the need would make things happen. They were privately supported nonprofits that operated inside schools and districts but generally steered clear of the bureaucracies and policies that surrounded them.

And of course, TFA and others were not alone in paying little attention to policymaking and lobbying. By and large, everyone relied on the think tanks—for example, the Brookings Institution and the Heritage Foundation—for ideas, and on the education membership groups (of which there was no shortage) and the national political parties for getting things done. Business organizations like the Business Roundtable and the Chamber of Commerce were somewhat more active and provided important political cover for George W. Bush's team, though views differed as to their level of activity and influence.

The only problem with this hands-off approach was that it gave inordinate power to associations and teachers unions when it came to the legislative process. Think tanks (there were many fewer of them back then) did not generally think of it as their job to influence Congress directly or forcefully. They responded to phone calls from curious Hill staffers,

scheduled events, and put out papers, but most stopped well short of any consistent advocacy and had no real ability to influence, reward, or punish lawmakers who did not agree with them. At least in terms of getting votes, the issue had been ceded to the union.

"Everyone depended on the unions to work the Hill," said Wilkins, simplifying only slightly. "We outsourced our brains."

Teacher Quality Becomes a Top Issue

Huffman's 2000 arrival at TFA might have been belated, but the organization's decision to staff up in DC could not have been more timely.

The biggest of the federal education laws, ESEA, had last been revisited in 1994, during the first term of the Clinton administration. An attempted reauthorization during the waning days of 2000 had collapsed. On the campaign trail, Texas Governor George W. Bush had made no secret of his desire to revisit the law and end what he called the "soft bigotry of low expectations." Once in office, the Bush administration would make getting ESEA reauthorized a top priority.

And although annual testing, school ratings, and accountability for low-income, special education, and English language learner students would get the lion's share of attention from Bush and others, there was no small amount of concern and attention—especially from Democrats and a handful of advocacy groups focused on low-income minority students—directed toward improving the quality, performance, and distribution of the nation's classroom teachers.

During the last few years of the 1990s, teacher quality had become a big issue in education policy circles and in Washington. "The issue has moved to center stage in the policy arena, with heavy-hitting business groups and politicians of all stripes now embracing teacher quality as a top priority," observed *Education Week's* Jeff Archer.⁴

Thanks to widely read reports like 1996's *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*,⁵ the

effect of classroom teachers was increasingly understood to be powerful. However, it was just as well known that too many kids—poor and minority kids, in particular—were being taught by mis-assigned or undertrained teachers. Teacher preparation, which was usually done by college or university schools of education, and teacher certification, usually the responsibility of state education agencies, had long been known as a weak part of the public education system.

There had been several previous efforts to address teacher quality programs, few of which had made any real dent in a system of training and qualifying teachers that emphasized classroom learning and low-level certification. The most recent attempt to revamp the teacher preparation pipeline, in 1998, was generally considered to have flopped.⁶

However, by 2000, several states had their own alternative certification laws and programs, a handful of paths to teaching for candidates not from an undergraduate or master's degree program in education but rather who obtained a degree in some other subject and then wanted to become a teacher. Some people thought that alternative certification might be a better—or the only—way to improve teacher preparation.

Allies and Enemies

New as he was to the job, Huffman could tell that TFA was not being taken very seriously in Washington. “It’s not like people didn’t know who Wendy was or TFA was,” he said. “But the reception was more of the nice pat on the back, ‘What a nice startup organization you are’ kind of thing.”

“Most people on the Hill were only vaguely familiar with them,” agreed longtime Capitol Hill education staffer Charlie Barone, who headed Congressman George Miller’s (D-CA) committee staff until 2003. “They were almost at the same level as [another small alternative certification program] Troops for Teachers.”

But what TFA lacked in government-relations savvy, it made up for in the form of friends in high places.

Interest from then-Texas governor George W. Bush had appeared during the summer of 2000, when, pretty much out of the blue, someone from his presidential campaign called and asked if the candidate could meet with a group of TFA teachers in Los Angeles. Apparently Bush wanted to know more about the organization from those who were making it happen—off the record and behind closed doors.

“That teed up a pretty good relationship with the administration,” said Huffman.

Shortly after the election, Barbara Bush picked TFA as one of a handful of programs that were most important to her as First Lady and invited Kopp to be her VIP guest at Bush’s 2001 budget message to Congress. Once in office, Bush himself visited an Atlanta school with a number of TFA teachers on January 31, 2002. There, he said, “I am proud to stand up and talk about the best of America and Wendy Kopp. I hope young Americans all across the country think about joining Teach for America.”⁷

On the Hill, TFA’s situation was much more complicated. Different people liked or disliked TFA for different reasons.

TFA was staffed largely by Democrat-leaning idealists. Its sites around the country tended to be Democratic strongholds: urban districts and poor, rural communities. Many of its alumni would end up tending to work for or eventually run for office as Democrats.

And yet some of its strongest early advocates—Representative John Boehner (OH) and Senator Lamar Alexander (TN)—were Republicans.

Republicans tended to like TFA for its ability to open up the teacher certification system and its focus on service. “TFA was a really connected, popular program among Republicans,” said Rich Stombres, a Republican House education committee staffer at the time. “It was just a good issue.”

Republicans also liked the teacher quality issue in general because it was an effective response to the class size reduction approach that many Democrats supported, including President Clinton.

Some Democrats liked TFA because of its focus on national service and, to varying degrees, its innovative

approach to teacher recruitment. Democratic stalwarts like Senators Barbara Mikulski (MD) and Hillary Rodham Clinton (NY) were key supporters, as were moderates like Senators Joe Lieberman (CT) and Evan Bayh (IN).

However, some of its strongest critics, including Senator Ted Kennedy (MA), were also Democrats. Widespread Democratic support would come only later.

In Kennedy's office, TFA was received with flat politeness. "I think Kennedy was always for the best-prepared teacher," said Jane Oates, the Democratic committee staffer who handled the teacher quality aspects of the reauthorization process. "The argument was always between getting a really bright, wonderful person for a short time versus getting a really bright, wonderful person for longer," she said. "That was his bigger issue."

These concerns echoed those raised by some who had been working on teacher quality issues and believed that expanding alternative certification could distract attention from fixing the teacher preparation system. One such group was the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), whose 1996 report *What Matters Most* had highlighted the many deficiencies in the teacher quality system. NCTAF's head was a Columbia University education professor named Linda Darling-Hammond, one of TFA's most prominent and persistent critics.

A Minor Issue in a Major Bill

The ESEA reauthorization process was delayed and interrupted several times during 2001, most notably because of the 9/11 attacks. And while atmosphere was more bipartisan than it would be a decade later, the massive thousand-page rewrite of the 1965 act was no easy feat to get approved by Republicans and Democrats in both the House and the Senate. Several of the ideas Bush was pushing, such as increased federal oversight over local schools, were heresy to more conservative Republican members. The notion of making schools and teachers accountable for annual

student achievement scores was deeply concerning to teachers unions and other members of the education establishment.

White House staffers Sandy Kress and Margaret LaMontagne (later Spellings) worked the phones from the White House, Kress focusing on the legislative language and Spellings coordinating with the Department of Education, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Republican leadership on the Hill. The main negotiations were between the Republicans and Democrats on the Hill, the White House, the teachers unions, and—to a certain extent—the business and civil rights groups.

Some people thought that alternative certification might be a better—or the only—way to improve teacher preparation.

Teach for America did its best to keep track of the stop-and-start proceedings going on in both houses of Congress. Kopp handled the Texas folks in the White House and the administration. Huffman did the rest, though he was eventually joined by additional staff. Their main concern was to make sure that there was no preclusion of alternative certification—that TFA teachers were not penalized in the new law when it came to the issue that came to be known as "highly qualified teachers" (HQT). They were questioning, as Huffman put it, "What rules are they going to put in place, and how do we make sure that nobody screws over alt certification?"

Kress and LaMontagne were well aware of TFA's concerns, but neither alternative certification (or "alt cert," as many insiders called it) nor the larger issue of teacher quality were top priorities for them. The Bush team had decided to stay away from teacher quality issues as much as possible, letting Democrats and teacher groups fight it out among themselves. "We had our 'must-haves' and our 'nice-to-haves,'" said Spellings. The Bush must-haves were annual testing,

disaggregation of results within schools, extra tutoring for kids at low-scoring schools, and other sanctions. Everything else, including teacher quality, was icing on the cake. “Everything related to teachers, well that was obviously more what the Dems needed,” she said. “The Dems needed money and teacher quality. We needed accountability and choice.”⁸

Among those concerned about teacher quality, one main goal was to reduce the percentages of unqualified or out-of-field teachers who were being hired with federal funding to teach low-income minority kids. Although state certification was known to be a weak and imperfect measure of teacher effectiveness, it was at least a threshold requirement that could be used to ensure that teachers in low-income classrooms were nominally as good as those in suburban and other schools.

Nearly everybody wanted to allow TFA teachers to remain eligible to teach in high-poverty schools, according to former Miller staffer Barone. But it was unclear how to categorize them. The best alternative-route teachers might be strong in their academic subject areas and were certainly better than someone who was not in any kind of certification program. But they were not fully prepared pedagogically, either.

They were somewhere in between: a category of teacher many states called “provisional” that did not exist in the legislation being debated on the Hill. There was some concern about creating a loophole that would simply encourage schools, districts, and states to use alternative certification as a vehicle for continuing hiring and placement practices of the past.

According to those who were intimately involved in the negotiations, the debate over highly qualified teachers was not resolved until near the end of the process, along with a slew of other issues. The provision regarding alternative certification was written and included in the final version of the legislation not too much ahead of the final vote.

Very late in the process, Miller’s office proposed statutory language that would have protected TFA specifically but would not have applied to alternative candidates in general. According to Barone, TFA declined.⁹

What Just Happened?

No one seems to remember the exact moment when it became clear that No Child Left Behind (NCLB) did not after all consider alternative-route teachers to be “highly qualified” under the new law.

“I don’t remember knowing all along” that NCLB did not consider TFA highly qualified, said a Republican staffer. “We were going through so many issues.”

Indeed, there was such a rush to get the conference done and so many different issues that had to be resolved in the thousand-page law that hundreds of provisions and thousands of versions were left on the cutting room floor.

Not everyone agreed that the new law actually deemed alternative certification candidates unqualified. “That’s just one interpretation of the law,” said a former congressional staffer who did not want to be named. “There are different ways to read the language.”

“I feel pretty strongly that everybody thought that TFA and those people would have a pathway to the classroom,” said Senator Lieberman’s education staffer, Michelle Stockwell. “I don’t think it was intentional.”¹⁰

The Bush administration believed that TFA was safe under the final conference report language that had been passed into law, according to Huffman, and that congressional intent was clear “even if the language was pretty loose.” He added, “I don’t remember our looking at it and thinking ‘Gosh, this is something that might be challenged.’”

But, of course, that was exactly what was about to happen.

The rewrite of the federal education law commonly known as No Child Left Behind received a broad, bipartisan vote of support from both the House and Senate in 2001 and was signed into law with great fanfare on January 8, 2002. Leaders of the House and Senate from both parties stood behind the president, beaming at what they hoped would help bring on a new, improved era of public education in America. NCLB was now the law of the land for the foreseeable future, unlikely to be amended again anytime soon.¹¹

By the end of the 2005–06 school year, 100 percent of teachers were supposed to be highly qualified. And according to the definitions section of the statute, “highly qualified” meant someone who had “obtained full State certification as a teacher (including certification obtained through alternative routes to certification) or passed the State teacher licensing examination, and holds a license to teach in such State.”¹²

Fixing the Language—Creating a Loophole

That language—specifically, the use of the word “obtained”—seemed to exclude alternative certification candidates who were already in the classroom but were still working on their certification.

The potential exclusion of TFA corps members as “unqualified” to teach was a major problem for TFA. Under the most dire possible scenario, its teachers would be laid off as soon as the law took effect. More realistically, any school that hired a TFA member to teach would generate a letter to parents informing them that their child’s teacher was not highly qualified. Any school or district that hired a TFA member would have that teacher count against the percentage of teachers considered highly qualified in annual report cards. Any struggle to find jobs for teachers would hinder TFA’s expansion and, ultimately, its recruitment.

Fortunately for TFA and other alternative certification programs, the organization perhaps best set up to prevent the spread of alternative certification was going through a major transition around the same time. In November 2001, just a few months before the law was signed into effect, NCTAF announced that Darling-Hammond was moving to Stanford University and it was getting a new leader.¹³

It also helped that the teachers unions were divided on the issue of alternative certification. The National Education Association (NEA) was generally opposed to alternative certification, but the American Federation of Teachers was not. Both unions also had bigger fish to fry, like the annual testing and school rating

requirements of NCLB; the transfer, tutoring, and restructuring sanctions that came with the new law; the potential threats to local collective bargaining agreements; and career educators who might not meet the law’s “highly qualified teacher” requirements.

“They worked hard; they got a lot of earmarks. When they came up on the Hill, they *came up on the Hill*.”

Most invaluable of all to TFA, the lawmaking process was not entirely complete. Errors could be fixed in regulations, the stage between when a law was passed and when it was implemented. As soon as the last version of the statute passed, OMB and the US Department of Education (USDE) began combing through the report, looking for internal contradictions or mistakes—often with the encouragement of parties whose ideas or interests had not been fully addressed during the previous legislative process.

Concerned about having its work undone, members of Congress and advocacy groups began trying to make sure that the regulatory process helped clarify the law but did not change its basic intentions. On June 11, 2002, Senator Kennedy sent a letter to the Department of Education that denounced any changes that were “inconsistent with the definition in [NCLB] which holds the same standards for all teachers.”¹⁴

But that is pretty much exactly what the 245-page draft regulations issued in early August did.¹⁵ Under the August draft regulations that received over 700 comments and were finalized in a 378-page regulation issued in late November, a teacher was highly qualified if he or she was in an alternative route to certification program that included “high-quality professional development,” provided “a program of intensive supervision,” and lasted no longer than three years. Alternative-route teachers also had to make satisfactory progress toward full certification.¹⁶ TFA teachers were now considered highly qualified under NCLB regulations for three years, as long as they were in a qualified certification program.

It was an awkward solution—the kind of ruling that made sense only in Washington. A handful of House and Senate Democrats decried the move, including Miller and Kennedy. “It does our children a disservice to call a teacher who does not even have state certification—and may never get it—‘highly qualified,’” wrote the two Democratic leaders in a joint letter. They denounced the Bush administration for creating what they called a “loophole” in the law.

TFA downplayed its involvement in the regulation-making process, but others remembered it differently. “It was TFA who got the [regulatory] exemption,” said Barone, now head of federal policy for Democrats for Education Reform. “I was in the room when Wendy came in to ask.”¹⁷

Appropriations and Authorization

In late 2001, just as NCLB was being finalized, TFA finally hired a full-time government relations person, Monica Healy, to help it get up to speed. Known to some for the headbands she favored, Healy had worked on Capitol Hill as staff director of the Senate Democratic Policy Committee for then-Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-ME) and co-chair Senator Tom Daschle (D-SD) and in the Clinton administration, as well as at a national nonprofit and as a state advocate. “She really taught us the ropes,” said Huffman.

Healy lobbied full-time for TFA from August 2001 until 2006, then worked part-time for it for another eighteen months as a consultant helping with the transition as TFA found her replacement. Over the next five years, she would help TFA increase its federal appropriation from \$1 million to between \$9 million (in the Senate appropriations bill) and \$12 million (in the House appropriations bill).

“They worked hard; they got a lot of earmarks. When they came up on the Hill, they *came up on the Hill*,” recalled Stombres.

Perhaps TFA’s biggest accomplishment during this period was getting the Teach for America Act added to the Higher Education Opportunities Act of 2008,

only one of a handful of education programs designed for a specific entity created since the 1960s, according to Healy.¹⁸

The effort to gain support for TFA’s funding initiatives was spearheaded by Democrats Senator Clinton and Representative Chris Van Hollen (MD). The key Republican champions were Senator Alexander and Representative Mike Castle (DE). During that period, TFA gathered as many as 150 signatures on letters in support for annual funding initiatives. Healy argued that these letters built goodwill and opportunities for champions in future efforts. Others were less sure.

Putting Out Fires and Resisting Entanglements

With Healy’s arrival, it might have appeared that TFA’s federal policy lobbying was secure and the alternative certification regulation issue was settled. “We felt like we were in good shape,” said Huffman about the period after NCLB was signed into law.

But that was not the case—at least, not quite yet. Huffman was learning how fickle Washington could be, what it meant to have a member of Congress’s support or friends in the White House, and how quickly things could change.

First, there was the 2003 AmeriCorps scare, a sudden and (to some) unexpected proposed elimination of funding for national service programs that had proliferated under the Clinton administration. At about the same time, the fight over NCLB implementation was heating up to red-hot levels. It would last much longer than the AmeriCorps scare and would not be resolved so smoothly or satisfactorily.

Almost from the moment it was passed into law, NCLB was under assault. Districts complained about having to set as much as 20 percent of their federal funding aside to pay for extra tutoring for kids at low-performing schools. States threatened to forego federal funding, and with the help of the NEA, at least one (Connecticut) sued the federal government for overreaching its authority. Its rules and sanctions were frequently described by critics as Draconian.

Looking around for support in an extremely difficult time, Spellings and Kress asked Kopp and TFA and others to help defend the beleaguered law against its growing list of critics. They were in the fight of their lives because if states, schools, and the public turned against NCLB, the law would never be implemented properly.

"We called them," said Kress. "They were supportive, though I don't know if I would say they were in the middle of things too much."

"TFA's for TFA. They want people to be with them when they're in the breach, but it tends to be a one-way street."

The law echoed TFA's high expectations, its emphasis on measurement and accountability, and its resolve that poverty and race did not have to determine a child's life outcomes. At a more pragmatic level, TFA and many others valued the annual testing data that came out of NCLB, which would become the centerpiece of its focus on teacher effectiveness and value-added measures of teacher impact (and its argument that TFA teachers were just as effective as traditionally prepared and certified teachers).

However, TFA was not persuaded by the argument that NCLB was going to create long-term demand for changes that TFA supported and needed, according to Kress. (Kopp does not recall these specific calls or conversations, according to her staff.)

"Every single time someone wanted us to take a position, we had a long internal debate," said Huffman, trying to figure out whether it made sense for TFA to get involved.

"I don't blame them," said Kress. "We were in an absolute war over preserving and extending accountability. . . . They have their part of the movement, and we have ours. We make the environment better for them; they make the accountability work. I don't see them as ducking responsibility."

Indeed, TFA was still a relatively young organization facing its own growing pains. Its 2003 expansion

into Detroit had ended in failure. (TFA withdrew from the district, though it would return nearly a decade later.) Some districts, like Chicago, were asking alternative candidates to stay at least three years, rather than TFA's standard two. TFA was also spending a lot of energy defending itself against outside critics.

And, quite understandably, Kopp and TFA feared the consequences of coming out in support of the law, which might include increased scrutiny for its teachers and resistance to opening new districts from local school boards and superintendents. NCLB was not TFA's law. It stayed out of the fray.

"It's not like it's a typical DC group. It's not a think tank. It's a program," said a former national staffer who did not want her name used. "Wendy wanted to focus on her program, on making her program better. She did not engage in policy."

In this sense, TFA still was not operating as a reform advocacy organization. It did not advocate on broader policy issues—yet. Not everyone was sanguine about this approach, however.

Some friends and allies with no stake in NCLB thought that paying too little attention to coalition building and advocacy was problematic. Alan Khazei, cofounder of City Year and one-time TFA board member, called the inclination to focus on organizational growth and disdain policy and advocacy "the social entrepreneur's trap."

Others were even more critical. "I was a big fan of TFA, and we did a lot for them, as did the First Lady," said a former Bush education official who did not wish to be named, ticking off a series of events held by the president and First Lady on TFA's behalf. "But TFA's for TFA. They want people to be with them when they're in the breach, but it tends to be a one-way street."

By 2004, NCLB had been pretty well tarnished. The bipartisan vote in favor of the law and Congress's role in setting funding levels were forgotten. The key roles Kennedy and Miller played in getting the laws passed were minimized. It was Bush's law. Fearful of handing Bush a domestic policy victory that would help him get elected to a second term, Democratic lawmakers, including Miller and Kennedy, began to

distance themselves from the law, using Bush's lackluster funding requests as a fig leaf.¹⁹

There was a clear need for an organization as big and well-known as TFA to weigh in on the big issues of the day, and there were future costs to staying out. Eventually, groups like TFA would come to realize that good intentions, quality programs, and defensive measures were not going to be enough if they wanted to expand and influence the massive public education system at scale. But the fight over NCLB implementation was not the right moment.

Legal Attack on the TFA Loophole

As the first George W. Bush term ended and the second began, questions surrounding the appropriateness of defining alternative-route candidates as highly qualified and TFA's role as a reform advocate continued to grow.

The organization was expanding the number of sites where it operated, and the number of teachers it placed. Its funding—federal and otherwise—continued to grow. As TFA alumni became more prominent and consistently associated with the reform movement, their presence and the positions they and their organizations took could be controversial or even polarizing.

Then, in August 2007, a California-based nonprofit filed a lawsuit against the 2002 alternative certification regulation, which had deemed alternative certification candidates highly qualified.²⁰ Called *Renee v. Spellings*, the case was filed by the California-based Public Advocates, a nonprofit created with a Ford Foundation grant and funded for many years by the Hewlett Foundation.

At the time, alternative certification still made up a small percentage of the 3.2 million classroom teachers in America, but it had grown quickly since the passage of NCLB in 2002. Texas and California led the nation in terms of alternative teachers, with Texas going so far as to allow for-profit providers. The New Teacher Project (now called TNTP), the TFA spinoff created in 1999 and headed by TFA alumna Michelle

Rhee, recruited, trained, and placed “fellows” in a number of locations around the country. Online education programs were beginning to appear, too.

The real issue was that alt cert teachers were concentrated in districts and schools that were particularly poor and overwhelmingly serving minority students. More than half of teachers without full certification were in high-poverty classrooms, according to John Affeldt, managing attorney for Public Advocates, compared to just 3 percent in low-poverty schools.

Others disagreed with Affeldt's logic, noting that banning alternative certification would make staffing low-income, high-poverty schools much harder and that reliance on certification was outdated and inaccurate. TFA teachers were assigned to the worst places by design, and they were sometimes the only available candidates since tenured veteran teachers resisted those assignments. It did not matter what route teachers took to the classroom, according to TFA, who would cite a 2009 Institute of Education Sciences report as evidence that even alternative certification programs that were less selective than TFA performed as well as traditional candidates.²¹

“It's not all that meaningful whether someone goes through a traditional program,” said one House education committee staffer who did not want to be named. “The input side doesn't give us a lot.”

Two issues were at play: The first was the question of whether certification and effectiveness had any real connection. Unfortunately, measures of teachers' outputs were limited and would remain extremely controversial for the next several years. The other issue was whether policy should be based on TFA or on the alternative certification sector as a whole.

Most alternative candidates were not recruited or selected by TFA. TFA recruits made up just 10 percent of alternative certification teachers, according to Emily Feistritz of the National Center for Alternative Certification. But TFA operated throughout the country and was perhaps the biggest alternative teacher recruitment operation. The public and the media continued to conflate TFA with alternative certification.

“TFA is 10 percent of alternative certification but has 100 percent of the political clout,” said Jane West, vice president of the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE).

An Impressive Legislative Feat Averts Disaster

Overall, the HQT provision would turn out to be a successful, if relatively unheralded, aspect of NCLB. “We have a lot less teachers teaching subjects they don’t know than we used to,” said Sandi Jacobs of the National Center on Teaching Quality. “You don’t too often find the drama teacher teaching chemistry anymore.” By 2010, more than 90 percent of elementary and secondary core classes would be taught by HQTs. But alternative certification programs were expanding rapidly.

Over the next three years, the *Renee* case wound its way through the legal system. The Bush administration would give way to the Obama team. And TFA would continue to grow and to secure impressive federal funding: \$16.8 million in FY 2009 and another \$21 million in FY 2010 (excluding National Service/AmeriCorps funding), and then the jackpot—\$50 million over five years—in the first round of the Obama administration’s Investing in Innovation competition.

Then, on September 27, 2010, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with Public Advocates and the plaintiffs in the *Renee* case that alternative certificate candidates were not highly qualified, no matter what the 2002 regulation had indicated.

The TFA loophole had already been the law of the land for eight years at this point. But now, by a 2-1 vote, the Ninth Circuit Court found against the government, and TFA, on what was now called *Renee v. Duncan*: “The definition of a highly qualified teacher contained in 34 C.F.R. 200.56(a)(2)(ii) is invalid because it *impermissibly expands the definition* in 20 U.S.C. 7801(23) [NCLB] to include teachers who only ‘demonstrates satisfactory progress toward full certification.’”

The appellate decision was a massive victory for Public Advocates. But from TFA’s point of view, it

was a disaster. One swing vote on a three-judge panel had overturned an eight-year-old federal regulation. With Congress winding down and a new recruitment and selection season fast approaching, regulations would not do any more: TFA needed something passed by Congress, and fast.

“We thought the status quo should be kept in place,” said Sandra (Sandy) Brown, an alumna of the TFA Rio Grande Valley class of 2004 who had been hired to replace Healy as TFA’s vice president for government affairs. A no-nonsense former aide to Senator Mitchell and an Amtrak government affairs staffer, Brown lived and breathed federal statutes and regulations, rattling off sections, numbers, and dates relating to the provisions that determined whether TFA lived or died. (“Some people say I get in the weeds sometimes,” Brown said, referring to her facility with intricate Washington details. “It’s my job.”)

By 2010, more than 90 percent of elementary and secondary core classes would be taught by HQTs. But alternative certification programs were expanding rapidly.

At first, it was thought that a provision to reverse the *Renee* decision could be included in the omnibus spending bill that was thought to be moving through Congress. In the acrimonious atmosphere of late 2010, however, congressional leaders and the White House could not agree on a spending bill. It eventually became clear that a continuing resolution (CR) was going to be needed, making things much harder.

CRs are much smaller, narrower vehicles than spending bills, focused on the minimum needed to prevent Washington from shutting down. They include an “anomalies” list, usually a handful of technical fixes and a small handful of larger policy provisions that everyone can agree on that usually runs ten or twenty pages with roughly a dozen items.

H.R. 3082, the Continuing Appropriations and Surface Transportation Act, came up for consideration in late December 2010, the interim period after the November 2010 midterm elections when Congress was rushing to adjourn. This was the last and only legislation that Congress would likely pass before adjourning.

From the outside, it was not at all clear that TFA could get its language into such a brief, closely scrutinized document. “It would be a huge, heavy huge lift, if they got it into the CR,” said Public Advocates’ Affeldt.

But, in a show of political prowess that would have been unimaginable just a few years before, that is exactly what they did. TFA did not even have to get its language added to the anomalies list by congressional leaders: the Obama White House took care of it for them (presumably having checked in with key Democratic leaders like Miller and Senator Tom Harkin [IA] beforehand).

The provision that clarified congressional intent on the matter was Section 163, which stated, “(a) A ‘highly qualified teacher’ includes a teacher who meets the requirements in 34 CFR 200.56(a)(2)(ii), as published in the Federal Register on December 2, 2002. (b) This provision is effective on the date of enactment of this provision through the end of the 2012–2013 academic year.”

Affeldt could not believe it when he heard about the reversal from the teachers colleges and did his best to activate his group of opponents, but there was no time. “It was crazy,” he said. “We had like two or three days to stop this from being put into the CR. No one knew what was going to be in the CR until the day of the CR.”

A few groups indicated their opposition to the provision. The NEA sent a December 20 letter, stating, “The regulatory loophole was bad policy in 2002, and it is bad policy today.”²²

The reversal was drafted and accomplished without consultation with any education groups, according to AACTE’s West, who recalls receiving a late-night e-mail about it. “It was just stunning,” she said. “I’ve been doing this for years, and I’ve never seen something that big done so behind the scenes—

particularly when you had poor parents being supported and a Democratic admin and Congress overturning it.”

On the Hill, there was some eye-rolling and mild grumbling, but nobody—not even Harkin or Miller—objected publicly. In the end, Congress specified that alt cert teachers were highly qualified through at least the 2012–13 school year.

It may be some time before methods of effectively evaluating teachers’ output are developed and implemented.

Merit, not legislative savvy, was the reason for the support, according to TFA’s Brown. “I think the impact of what we’re doing in your districts is why we have so many people signing letters of support,” she said. “People can go home and see it. House members, they know the principals, the superintendents—they know some of the teachers.”

Still, it probably did not hurt that Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid’s education aide was Jason Unger, a TFA alumnus, or that TFA had recently opened a site in Las Vegas, his home state.²³ Alexander’s former education aide, Kristin Bannerman, was a TFA alumnus also. Harkin’s top teacher quality person was Michele McLaughlin, who had until May been TFA’s vice president for federal and state policy. Senator Michael Bennet’s (D-CO) education staffer, Joy Silvern, would soon leave the Hill to join a TFA spinoff.

House Republicans were OK with the language as long as its estimated \$3 million cost was not scored by OMB as adding to the federal deficit. Supporting the extension was not a difficult call for House Republicans, according to Stombres: “What are you going to do; are you going to shut down the entire alt cert industry?”

But most of the heavy lifting was done by Democrats, who controlled Congress at the time. “Alt cert and TFA were controversial ten years ago,” said one Republican staffer who remembered battling the Kennedy staff during the NCLB deliberations. “Fast-forward ten years later, and you have a Democratic

administration asking for a fix to protect TFA—and there's no major pushback.”

Senator Harkin's office issued a statement after the resolution was adopted that noted that the Ninth Circuit's decision “could cause significant disruptions in schools across the country and have a negative impact on students” and urged Congress to revamp NCLB at the earliest possible moment.²⁴

Persuaded that inaction would create chaos and endanger TFA—and that a reauthorization of NCLB was just around the corner—Democratic lawmakers like Miller did not make a stink. “There was no good choice,” said one former Democratic aide.

Brown described the events with quiet pride. “Eight years [after the passage of NCLB], a three-judge panel voted two to one that the regulations were inconsistent with intent of Congress. Congress acted very quickly, two months later, to say ‘No, that is our intent, that [2002 regulation]. Keep the status quo, until it's changed by us.’ The CR was not something that TFA accomplished on its own, however. “Did we support it? Absolutely,” said Brown with typical TFA restraint. “But I wouldn't say we got it done.”

The CR was signed into law on December 23, 2010. Afterward, Miller and others were briefly lambasted by a handful of civil rights and disability groups. At very least, according to AACTE's West, Congress should have demanded collection of data on the number and distribution of alternative certification candidates. For that, TFA critics would have to wait a little longer.

Stepping Forward, but Still Gun-Shy

The December 2010 CR seemed to make clear that TFA was no longer powerless when it came to lobbying Congress to protect its interests. The organization was now capable of complex maneuvers that demonstrated skill and political support in Congress. This trend would continue in the following years.

“Have you ever heard *any* member of Congress criticize them?” asked one Washington insider who did not want to be named. Indeed, only a few—

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders among them—voiced concerns about the TFA model or offered amendments that would limit their placement in high-poverty classrooms, as Sanders did in 2011.

“TFA plays with everybody,” said Stombres, who eventually left Capitol Hill and now works with Penn Hill Group, a consulting group made up of veteran staffers.

“I don't think you could find anybody who's more politically effective in securing funding and provisions that affect their program,” said AACTE's West, referring to the TFA lobbying operation.

After more than a decade at TFA, Huffman left in April 2011 to become the Tennessee state superintendent of education. During that period, TFA's overall revenue had grown from \$11 million to \$110 million, and its reach had expanded to fourteen additional sites.

Other reform organizations attempted to follow suit, staffing up in Washington and winning access to the federal funding and policymaking process.

However, TFA's long-standing focus on its own program remained in place during the first years of the Obama administration. The organization still did not have much to say about the big issues of the day: Arne Duncan's NCLB waiver plan, seniority-based layoffs, value-added measures of teacher effectiveness, or the preservation of the subgroup accountability requirement that was critically important to the Education Trust and others. They were not signing on to group letters expressing broad policy positions, or the letters they were signing on to were late or off the mark, according to some observers.

“Folks in the reform community always wanted TFA to take more ‘positions,’” said Huffman. “People in national service—same thing. Civil rights community? The same.” Huffman dismissed most of these requests to sign on to letters or group statements or participate in events as “token” gestures.

But there was only so long that TFA could expand or make the claim it was agnostic on reform arguments following the November 2010 midterm elections. So many of its alumni were involved in aggressive reform efforts; fully a third of its teachers

were placed in charter schools; and debates over seniority protections, layoffs, and school closures reached a fever pitch.

The shift began slowly, tentatively, and then accelerated somewhat. In February 2011, the TFA 20th Anniversary Summit included a panel on the importance of political leadership. Released at about the same time, Kopp's second book touched on the importance of engaging with educators and leaders beyond TFA's programmatic interests.²⁵ In May 2011, Kopp sent an ESEA reauthorization priorities letter including the topic of subgroup accountability to the heads of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and visited Capitol Hill offices talking to members and staff about the issue, according to Brown. Subgroup accountability appeared on only the last page of the letter, item number eight of eight, after a long list of narrower priorities.²⁶ But it was a start.

Later that year, Kopp began talking more openly about her opposition to publishing teachers' performance scores in the newspaper, a practice the *Los Angeles Times* undertook and that was advocated in Steve Brill's 2011 book *Class Warfare*.

A spring 2012 *Education Next* article by Drew University political scientist Patrick McGuinn described how TFA, among other organizations, had begun participating in monthly Washington meetings and occasional group efforts to weigh in on reform issues.²⁷ One of results was TFA signing on to an August 2012 letter calling on the Obama administration to issue teacher preparation regulations. In September 2012, Kopp would weigh in on the pages of the *Financial Times* against the Chicago teachers strike.²⁸

However, most of the reform advocacy efforts McGuinn described were state-based. State advocacy groups proliferated around the country. Many of them included political advocacy and campaign donation activities that TFA still avoided.

"The reformers haven't been able to come together as an effective counterweight to all that opposition [in Washington]," said former Lieberman aide Stockwell, describing the post-2010 environment. "I don't

see them actively engaging on providing constructive consensus policy positions for legislators . . . the federal debate has regressed."

In September 2012, congressional leaders came to a tentative agreement extending the TFA exemption. This time, however, the extension was just for a year, and called for a report on the number and distribution of alternative certification candidates.²⁹

"I still don't think TFA has made a major shift on taking positions," said Huffman.

Lessons Learned

No shortage of opinions exist in Washington and elsewhere about what TFA should do or should have done, and of course it is much easier to assess its decision making after the fact than it was to make those decisions in real time.

Looking back at the story of Teach for America's Capitol Hill experience during the 2000s, we see some obvious things that could have been—but were not—taken care of until much later and in some cases remain unaddressed:

- **Delayed establishment of a full-fledged Washington lobbying presence:** TFA was fortunate not to have been permanently damaged during the 2001–02 ESEA reauthorization process and should probably have already been in position for the 1997–98 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, which also addressed teacher preparation.
- **Limited coalition building:** TFA's decision to let others defend the annual testing and accountability provisions in NCLB and the overall funding levels for federal education programs created resentment and isolation from other groups, advocates, and offices. Support for TFA among legislators on Capitol Hill grew strong; support among other school reform groups has remained thin and patchy.

But TFA should also be admired for at least a handful of key accomplishments and strategies:

- **Appropriations and authorization:** In the tumultuous years since the enactment of NCLB, TFA maintained access to AmeriCorps funding and secured additional federal funding through a variety of means (including a new program authorization on a higher education bill).

- **Bipartisan appeal:** While many nonprofits and initiatives rely predominantly on the members of one party or the other for support, TFA has cultivated support from Republicans and Democrats in roughly equal measure.

Last but not least, TFA and other reform groups would do well to look closely at at least two areas that remain unaddressed:

- **Addressing quality in the alternative certification industry:** While much attention has been given to TFA's "movement-building" efforts in terms of alumni development, it seems to have spent little energy leading the alternative certification movement, which now includes an estimated five hundred different programs of greatly varying quality. These numbers are likely to increase with the arrival of online, blended, and for-profit operators. It may be some time before methods of effectively evaluating teachers' output are developed and implemented.
- **National advocacy:** The last few years have shown just how effective education advocacy can be, at least at the state level. TFA is the reform movement's most iconic, well-known organization, and to have it continue to try and stay out of the nation's

hottest education debates (or feign neutrality when its interests are obvious) seems increasingly unworkable. The organization has recently joined a coalition of other national reform groups, called America Forward, which may help address this need.

Notes

1. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations are taken from telephone interviews or e-mail conversations with the author.

2. Wendy Kopp, *One Day, All Children: The Unlikely Triumph of Teach for America and What I Learned along the Way* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003).

3. *Ibid.*, 189.

4. Jeff Archer, "Commission on Teaching Appoints New Leadership at Critical Juncture," *Education Week*, November 28, 2001, www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2001/11/28/13nctaf.h21.html (accessed October 4, 2012).

5. National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future* (Woodbridge, VA: Author, September 1996).

6. Julie Blair, "Critics Claim Missteps on Execution of Title II," *Education Week*, August 2002, www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2002/08/07/43hea.h21.html (accessed October 3, 2012).

7. The White House, "President Stresses Volunteerism at Atlanta High School" (Remarks by the president at Booker T. Washington High School, Atlanta, GA, January 31, 2002), <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020131-7.html> (accessed October 3, 2012).

8. Needless to say, Democratic staff did not agree with Spellings's assessment that they were more focused on teacher quality and funding than on accountability and school improvement.

9. Huffman recalls this only vaguely, and TFA did not provide any further information on these discussions.

10. Not everyone agreed that it was unintentional. "I think the Kennedy staff was probably soft-pedaling what was going on and not being completely honest with them," said a Republican staffer who did not want to be named.

11. Reauthorization attempts in 2007 and 2011 would both fail.
12. *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, Public Law 107–110, 107th Cong. (Jan. 8, 2002), Sec. 9101.
13. Archer, “Commission on Teaching.”
14. Edward Kennedy, Floor Statement before the US Senate, *Congressional Record* 148, no. 76 (June 11, 2002), www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CREC-2002-06-11/html/CREC-2002-06-11-pt1-PgS5341-2.htm (accessed October 4, 2012).
15. Erik W. Robelen, “Rules Clarify Changes on Teacher, Paraprofessional Qualifications,” *Education Week*, August 7, 2002, www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2002/08/07/43quality.h21.html (accessed October 4, 2012); Lynn Olson, “Long-Awaited ESEA Rules Are Released,” *Education Week*, August 7, 2002, www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2002/08/07/43ayp.h21.html (accessed October 4, 2012).
16. Lynn Olson, “Final Rules Give States Direction, Little Flexibility,” *Education Week*, December 4, 2002, www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2002/12/04/14ayp.h22.html (accessed October 4, 2012).
17. Asked to verify the facts in a draft version of this chapter, TFA did not question or contradict Barone’s assertion.
18. *Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008*, Public Law 110–315, 110th Cong. (August 14, 2008).
19. Alexander Russo, “Flunking Out: Bush’s Pet Education Bill Is in Serious Trouble,” *Slate Magazine*, August 28, 2003, www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/the_best_policy/2003/08/flunking_out.html (accessed October 4, 2012).
20. Nanette Asimov, “Lawsuit Challenges Labeling of ‘Highly Qualified’ Teachers,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 22, 2007, www.sfgate.com/education/article/Lawsuit-challenges-labeling-of-highly-qualified-2508745.php (accessed October 4, 2012).
21. Jill Constantine et al., *An Evaluation of Teachers Trained through Different Routes to Certification* (Institute for Education Sciences, February 2009), http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20094043/summ_3.asp (accessed October 4, 2012).
22. Kim Anderson and Mary Kusler, Letter to the US Senate, December 20, 2010, www.educationvotes.nea.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/CR-HQT-shortcut-letter.pdf (accessed September 26, 2012).
23. Brown denied that TFA picked expansion sites based on their political value. “We weren’t in West Virginia until last year,” she noted.
24. Valerie Strauss, “Congress Approves Weird Definition of ‘Highly Qualified’ Teachers,” Answer Sheet blog (*Washington Post*), December 23, 2010, <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/answer-sheet/teachers/congress-passes-weird-definiti.html> (accessed October 4, 2012).
25. Wendy Kopp, *A Chance to Make History: What Works and What Doesn’t in Providing an Excellent Education for All* (New York: Public Affairs, 2012).
26. Teach for America, “ESEA Priorities Letter,” May 2011 (provided by TFA).
27. Patrick McGuinn, “Fight Club,” *Education Next* 12, no. 3 (Summer 2012), <http://educationnext.org/fight-club> (accessed October 4, 2012).
28. Wendy Kopp, “Chicago Symbolises US Education Woes,” *Financial Times* (London), September 13, 2012.
29. Alyson Klein, “Stopgap Spending Measure Deals with Highly Qualified Teacher Issue,” Politics K–12 blog (*Education Week*), September 18, 2012, http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2012/09/stop_gap_spending_measure_deal.html (accessed October 4, 2012).